



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Rich.Malinowski@noaa.gov

727-824-5305, FAX 727-824-5308

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NOAA Fisheries Announces Modifications to Gag and Black Grouper Recreational Management Measures in the Gulf of Mexico

Small Entity Compliance Guide

NOAA Fisheries has published a final rule changing gag and black grouper recreational management measures in the Gulf of Mexico. The new regulations become effective on May 25, 2016. However, the gag recreational season does not open until June 1, 2016. The changes include:

- 1) An increase in the gag recreational minimum size limit from 22 inches total length to 24 inches total length.
- 2) An increase in the black grouper recreational minimum size limit from 22 inches total length to 24 inches total length.
- 3) A lengthening of the gag recreational fishing season from July 1 – December 2, to June 1 – December 31.

Need for Action:

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has chosen to increase the recreational minimum size limits for gag and black grouper from 22 inches total length to 24 inches total length. This increase is expected to provide more opportunity for gag and black grouper to mature before entering the fishery, and creates consistent recreational size regulations with those developed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and State of Florida for gag and black grouper.

The Council also decided to lengthen the recreational fishing season from July 1 – December 2, to June 1 – December 31, which applies to the 2016 fishing season. Should the gag recreational annual catch limit be projected to be met before December 31, the gag season would close when the recreational annual catch limit is projected to be reached.

Electronic Copies of the final rule and supporting documents may be obtained from NOAA Fisheries Web site:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/reef_fish/2016/gag_and_black_grouper_framework/index.html.

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.